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An unrepealed Act of George III., it appears, prohibits the charging of a fee on Sundays for admission to a public place, and the police are using this rusty old weapon against the Rationalistic Association of Auckland, which has thought it prudent not to contest the matter in the Courts. Some of the papers have censured the police for their action, holding the opinion that obsolete Acts of that kind should not be revived. We cannot agree with this opinion. The duty of the Executive is to enforce the law, and no law is obsolete which can be enforced. Freethinkers should clearly understand the merits of this question. Lord Coleridge lately, in the case of Mr. Foote and his friends, placed the most liberal interpretation on the law of blasphemy; but his dicta have been questioned by Mr. Justice Stephen, who traces at every turn the harsh and cruel features of the law. There is no guarantee against a revival of prosecution while an oppressive law exists. If the Act of George is in force in the colony, we have no right to blame the police for their action. What has to be done is to get it repealed; and as no one can very well defend so senseless a prohibition, it should not be difficult to remove the dead hand of the Georgian lawgiver from New Zealand.

The French are keen wits, and the report of the Committee appointed on the Recidiviste question is a characteristic production. The prosperity of the Australian colonies is due to the fact that they arose out of convictism, and hence France must insist on following so excellent an example! We are further informed that French criminals of the artizan class prefer New Caledonia. This probably means that it will be some advantage to Australia to have the chance of an accession to its population of a class which, though criminal, is artizan and French at the same time. Of course so polite a nation would never insinuate that because Australia received convicts at one time, it should not object to receive them now. But seriously, how little French politicians know of the new world,—almost as little as they knew of Germany in 1870!

The 'Manawatu Times' quotes as follows from a recent speech made by the Hon. Major Atkinson:— "He was in favor of a State religion, and thought it a disgrace to us, as a Christian people, that we could not sink all differences and worship God without all these creeds." The logic of this may be expressed in a few words. Does Major Atkinson believe in none of the creeds? If so he must have some special belief of his own, and this belief is itself a creed. If he objects to the Immaculate Conception, we see no reason why the Roman Catholics should abandon the dogma in order to attain uniformity. He is trying to attain therefore at the impossible. The line is drawn at Christianity, and all outside that pale would have, it appears, to acknowledge the new State religion. With the advance of Freethought the Christian sects

will no doubt approach each other more closely, and they will sink many of the feuds and differences in face of the common enemy. But by the time when they will all be found in such agreement as to accept a national form of religion, Freethinkers will be numerous enough to be able to resist even the united efforts to establish Christianity upon an official basis.

Just previous to the General Election which this colony has lately passed through, the President of the "Wanganui Freethought Association" very properly deprecated the advice of a member of the kindred Association in Wellington (where it was seemingly received with applause) that a "block vote" should be given by Freethinkers on general political questions. To do so would be to act upon the principles, and to adopt the practice, of the bitterest opponents of freethought. It is not Freethinkers who should follow the bad example of those who attach undue importance to the holding of a certain set of theoretical opinions upon abstract questions. Character, and special knowledge and ability in relation to political matters, and even special views on the questions that are likely to occupy the attention of Parliament, are surely of more importance in determining the fitness of a candidate to assist in the legislation and government of a country, than his theological or anti-theological ideas. There might be special occasions on which a Freethinking block vote would properly be given, e.g., if any serious attempt were made to interfere by legislation with freedom of thought and expression. At present no such danger threatens, and it would be a great mistake for Freethinkers to act as if they were a sect anxious to use political power to assist in spreading their opinions.

The result of the General Election serves to show that a large number of Roman Catholics had too much good sense and honesty to sacrifice their individual political convictions at the command of their priests. Indeed, bigotry of all kinds has been taught a useful lesson, and those persons who thought that the electors would virtually disfranchise themselves at their bidding will perhaps remember it for future use. 'The Tablet' indeed draws a different moral, and advises Catholic voters to sacrifice everything to the education question regarded from their point of view. According to this plan of operations, every effort is to be made to place Catholics on the electoral rolls in order that they may vote so as to "disorganise parties" and thus "compel them in the long run to unite and settle the education question on just and equitable principles." Apart from the obvious immorality of this advice, 'The Tablet' forgets that two can play at such a game as this. A class that deliberately combined to injure the community at large, in order to advance its own supposed interests, would soon be regarded as political "dynamitards" who would have to be rendered powerless for evil at all hazards.